1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

SETTING

THE KASKA AREA

THE fifteen thousand square miles constituting the intermontane region occupied by the Kaska Indians west of the Rocky Mountains are divided between uninhabited mountainous terrain visited for hunting and trapping, and wide, rolling river valleys in which a sparsely distributed population carries on the bulk of its activities. Running away from these river valleys the country becomes increasingly hilly as it proceeds toward the eastern Rocky Mountains and the western Cordillera (Fig. 1). North of Frances Lake and south of Dease Lake these mountain systems come close together to provide the natural frontiers of the Kaska area. About halfway up Dease River from Lower Post, an offshoot of the Cordillera—the Cassiar Mountains—transects the country from northwest to southeast. Other minor ranges, including the Simpson Mountains, traverse the region between Frances Lake, on the north, and the Liard River, on the south.

The mountains provide sources for the numerous rivers and creeks that drain the country. All of these waters flow into the Liard River, which empties into the Mackenzie, and, eventually, reach the Arctic Ocean. The rivers are generally fast and shallow and marked by many sloughs. Their crooked courses are interrupted by numerous places where the current is swift and turbulent and by several narrow canyons which are impassable. A number of small lakes are also scattered throughout the area.

The climate of the country alternates between hot summer days with cool evenings, and cold winters in which the temperature hovers around twenty degrees below zero and even reaches sixty or seventy degrees below. Frosts set in around the middle of August and by early September the few deciduous trees have lost their color. Several weeks of intermittent rainfall can be expected after the first of September. When this period ends, the willows and poplars are free of leaves. By late October the rivers run with slush, small lakes and sloughs are frozen, and ice is beginning to form along the shores of the larger streams. Dry snow falls from the middle of October. After the middle of November even the larger rivers are covered with ice except for a few stretches of swift, open water. Winter has set in. In the Upper Liard area snow reaches a depth of fifteen inches by Christmas and three or four feet by the end of January. Around the beginning of March the dry, powdery snow of winter becomes moist under the warmer sun and the prevailing westerly wind (the Chinook), and the surface of the snow begins to form a thick, heavy crust. In April the river ice begins to break and the streams run with ice floes. The northern latitude of the area is associated with long days in summer. In late June and early July the sun rises at about 2:30 A.M. and sets about 10:30 P.M. Complete darkness is absent during this period. In winter long nights are the rule, the sun rising about 9:30 A.M. in December and setting at about 3:00 P.M. Because of its low position on the southern horizon, however, the winter sun is not warming.

The country, part of the circumpolar boreal forest belt, is marked by a predominance of coniferous flora. The principal species include red and black spruce and jack-pine; balsam

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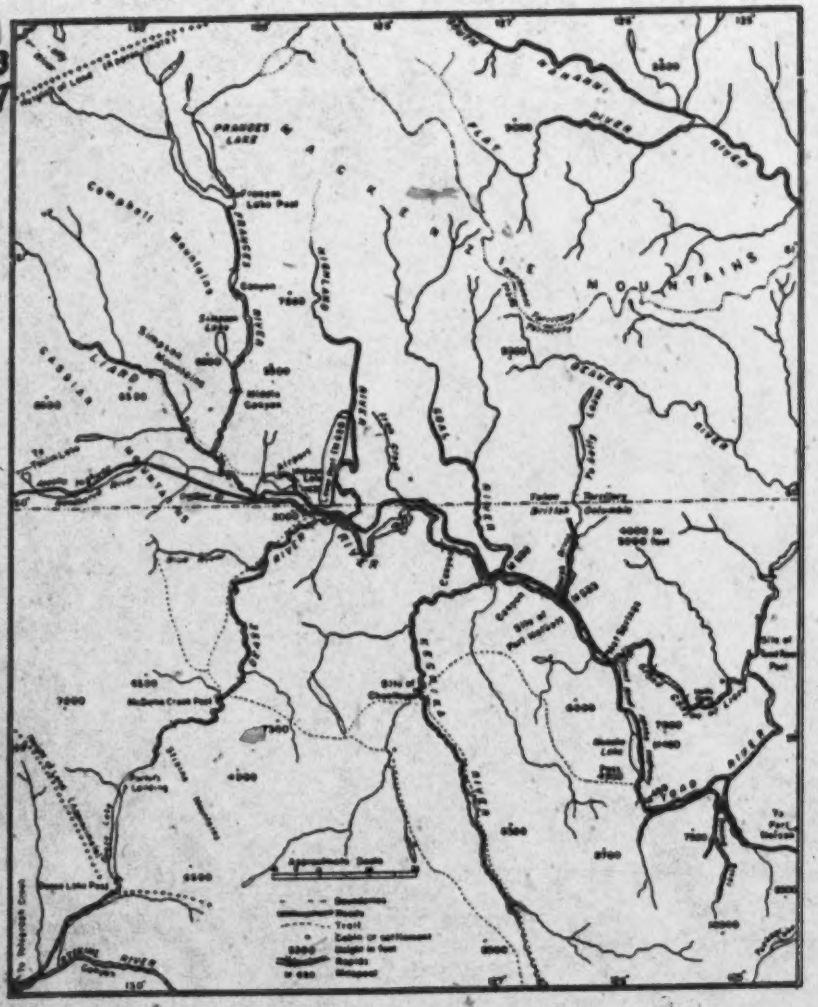

FIG. 1. Map of the Cassiar and Adjacent Area.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

137 occurs at the higher elevations. Along the rivers and creeks, as well as in the forest, there is a profusion of red willow. Also interspersed in the forest are patches of quaking aspen (locally called poplar), birch, and cottonwood. The area contains many edible berries, including the strawberry, soapberry, low and high bush cranberry, raspberry, and blueberry. Along dry sloughs there is often a profusion of coarse grass, while niggerheads are found in an occasional swamp.

136 Animal life is quite abundant. Represented are large game animals such as the moose, woodland caribou, sheep, and goat and fur-bearing mammals like the lynx, mink, wolverine, otter, fox, coyote, wolf, beaver, and marten. Deer are rare. In the high mountains gopher and groundhog are numerous. The ubiquitous red squirrel is heard chattering everywhere and the spruce forests are overrun with the small trails worn by the feet of the Arctic hare (locally called rabbit). Fish are generally abundant in the lakes, mainly lake trout, whitefish, and jackfish (or pike). In the rivers the principal species are trout, grayling (sometimes called bluefish), and sucker.

The mosquito is a plague until the middle of August; the small "no-see-um" becomes a nuisance at about the time when the mosquito disappears and remains until late October. The gray mouse is a household pest whose numbers foil any attempt at eradication. Birds include the robin, crow, hoot owl, whiskey jack (or Canada jay), and various winter species like the grosbeak. There are also such fowl as the duck, goose, ptarmigan, willow grouse, [829] and spruce hen. The two latter species are sometimes collectively referred to by the Indians as "chicken," although a distinction is recognized between them.

101 The name "Kaska" is the conventional term adopted by anthropologists to designate a
● 131 number of linguistically and culturally related Athapaskan Indian bands or tribes living in
619 the area of northern British Columbia, southern Yukon Territory, and Northwest Territories in Canada.[1] The present monograph is the result of work done with four of these tribes, but does not include the Espato'tena, who dwell in the Northwest Territories, east of the Rocky Mountains and are ethnographically unknown. The term Kaska is largely synonymous with the less satisfactory designation, Nahani, which, although formerly used by the Kaska to refer to neighboring Indian groups, is not employed as a term of reference within the society.

The four tribes under discussion are locally identified with particular geographical regions, which are in turn definable by the rivers and lakes constituting their main drainage channels. Except possibly in British Columbia, where trap lines are now formally registered, the boundaries between tribal units are not precisely recognized by the members of any tribe. Figure 2 shows the locations of the four Kaska tribes and their hunting and trapping districts, although only the second two listed below call themselves Kaska.

1. The Frances Lake Indians, the most northern tribe, live around Frances Lake, Simpson Lake, and the upper Frances River.[2] Their country extends from the Pelly River watershed on the northwest to the Mackenzie Mountains in the east.

[1] Osgood, *The Distribution of the Northern Athapaskan Indians* (1936), 13.

[2] The Albees on their walk up the Frances River in 1942 found the first signs of Frances Lake Indian camping grounds above the middle canyon of that stream. Albee and Albee, *Family Afoot in the Yukon Wilds* (1942) 614.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

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Fig. 2. Map of Kaska and Adjacent Indian Groups.

[p. 34]

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

2. The Upper Liard Indians. This tribe consists of six families living along the Liard River from about eighteen miles north of the Alaska Highway crossing above Lower Post to within a hundred miles of that river's source. Their trapping ranges from the Cassiar Mountains on the west to the Simpson Mountains in the east, where they frequently encounter members of the Frances Lake Tribe.

3. The Dease River Indians are designated in the Indian Affairs Branch census as the Casca Band. They occupy the basin of Dease Lake and Dease River north to Lower Post and also range west along Blue River and McDame Creek to the Height of Land.

4. The Nelson Indians are the most easterly of these four tribes.[1] They live east of Lower Post on both the north and south banks of the Liard River and range up the Hyland, Smith and, for a short distance at least, Muddy (or Kechika) Rivers. Families trapping south along the Muddy River meet the Tsetsa'na and Bear Lake Indians (both Sekani groups). A number of Nelson Indians trapping south of the Liard and up the Muddy River appear to have identified themselves with the Tsetsa'na through intermarriage. Eastward, the Nelson people hunt to the Rocky Mountains and in the past crossed these ranges to trade at Fort Nelson, from whence they derive their name.

In 1944-45, Lower Post, located at Milepost 620 on the Alaska Highway (Pl. 1), was the main trading post serving all of these tribes. A smaller outpost, supplied by air freight, served a portion of the Frances Lake Indians. Less than five years before, however, trading posts were in operation at McDame Creek, eighty miles up Dease River from Lower Post, and at the head of Dease Lake.

To the south and southwest the Kaska are adjoined by the Tahltan Indians, trading at Telegraph Creek on the Stikine River. To the west, across the barrier of the Cassiar Mountains, the Dease River and Upper Liard Indians occasionally meet the Taku Indians trading at Teslin Lake Post. Beyond the Taku are the Tlingit Indians, occupying the Alaska panhandle. On the north the Kaska are bounded by the Pelly River Indians (Tutchone nation). To the northeast are the Mackenzie (Mountain) Indians and, east, the Espato'tena and Slave Indians of Fort Nelson, Nelson Forks, and Fort Liard. The Slave refer to the Kaska as "Grand Lakers," which is apparently a translation of tutlo'tena, the present day Kaska term of reference for the Frances Lake people. Occupying the middle and upper Muddy River are the Sekani bands already referred to, who divide their trade between Lower Post and Whitewater (Fort Ware), on the Finlay River.

[1] This statement would not hold if the present monograph included the Goat Indians, or Espato'tena, who trade into Forts Liard and Simpson. In the system of classification adopted for the Northern Athapaskans, these people have commonly been grouped as Kaska (see Osgood, *The Distribution of the Northern Athapaskan Indians* [1932], 396). Since such classification is primarily on a linguistic basis and because no study of the Espato'tena has yet been reported, the validity of their classification with the Kaska may legitimately be questioned, especially if reasons for doubt can be advanced. Contrary evidence comes from Cf. Man stating, on the basis of brief acquaintance with this tribe, that he could not too well understand their dialect. This suggests that the provisional grouping of the Espato'tena with other Kaska tribes may be incorrect.

A somewhat cursory examination of the dialect of the Tsetsa'na people tends to warrant their exclusion from the Kaska nation, despite their proximity to the latter. See Jenness, *The Sekani Indians of British Columbia* (1937), 5, 10; Osgood, *The Distribution of the Northern Athapaskan Indians* (1932), 17.

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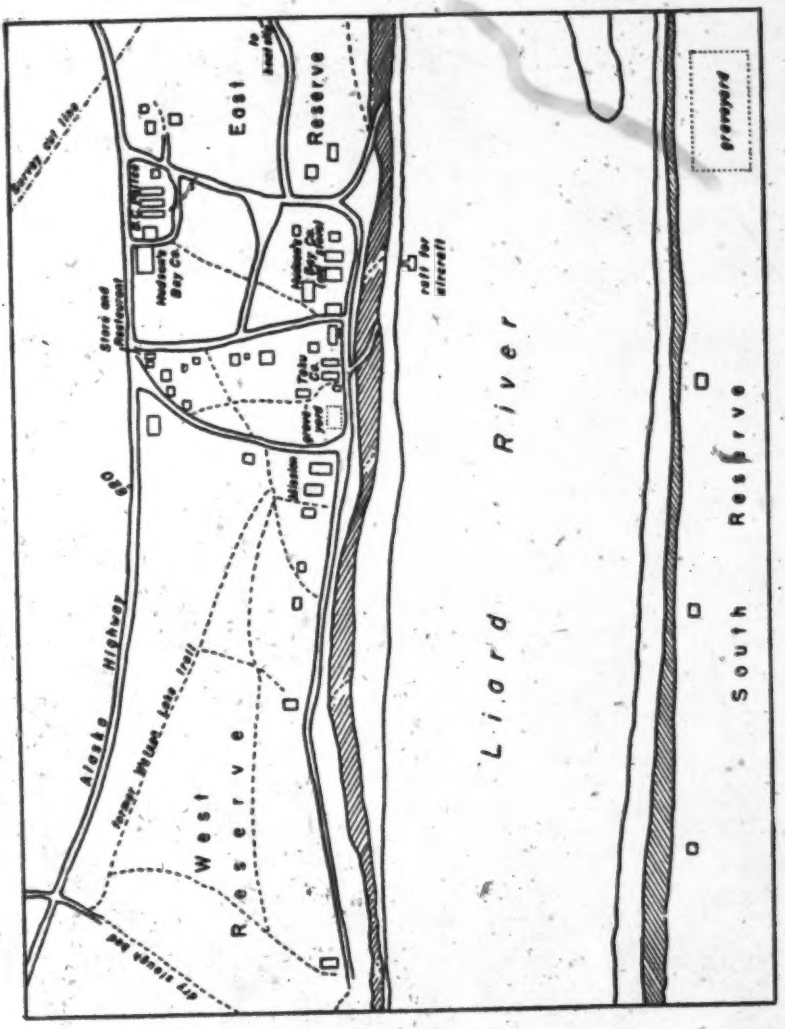

FIG. 7. Plan of Lower Post, showing Indian Reserves.

2: Teit E-5 (1912-1915) 1917
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KASKA TALES.[1]

BY JAMES A. TEIT.

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PREFACE.

THE following collection of tales or traditions is from the Kaska of the northern interior of British Columbia. The Kaska and Tahltan are closely related tribes of the Nahani division of the Athapascan stock, and occupy territories adjacent to each other. The Tahltan inhabit the whole region of the upper Stikine River, and extend easterly to Dease Lake and River, where they meet the Kaska, who claim the country from there down to the Liard. The Tahltan are thus chiefly on the Pacific drainage slope, and the Kaska altogether on the Arctic slope. Owing to their location, the Tahltan have an abundance of salmon in their country, while the Kaska have none. Both tribes live

[1] The present collection of Kaska tales, together with another one of Tahltan tales, was collected by Mr. J. A. Teit in the seasons of 1912 and 1915 in the region of Stikine River, British Columbia. These two seasons of field-work were devoted to a general ethnological investigation of the Tahltan and Kaska Indians, under the auspices of the Geological Survey of Canada. The present publication embraces the mythological results of the trips. Other aspects of the ethnology collected by Mr. Teit will be published by the Geological Survey from time to time in the form of special monographs. To facilitate the appearance of Mr. Teit's Tahltan and Kaska tales, the Geological Survey of Canada has authorised its Division of Anthropology to intrust their publication to the American Folk-Lore Society. — E. SAPIR, Head of Division of Anthropology, Geological Survey of Canada.

4: HonigmannE-5 (1943-1945)1956 ND12 Nahane ND12

ARE THERE NAHANI INDIANS?

by

John J. Honigmann

101 According to the map-makers two "Nahanni" Rivers flow into the Mackenzie and Liard rivers. But is there a tribe of Nahani Indians? Has anyone ever heard an Athapaskan Indian seriously designate himself as "Nahani"? There is, as will be seen, good reason why such a term would not likely be employed to refer to one's own group.

●131 The logical place to look for Nahani people would be in the northern drainage slope of the Liard River or northwest of the confluence of the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers. It is here that the rivers bearing that name originate. This has long been rather sensationally described as a region of mystery, one including hidden valleys, cannibal Indians, and real enough hot springs. In 1890 Keith in his Letters to Mr. Roderic Mackenzie indeed wrote of the Fort Liard area as having been abandoned by the "Na ha ne tribe" under pressure from a new population (5, p. 11). However, this is not the only region where the elusive Nahani have been said to dwell.

From the upper Liard (Kaska) Indians, whose country borders that river from about Lower Post, B.C., to within some hundred miles of its source in the Yukon, the writer in 1944 heard that long ago Nahani hunted in the region between McDame Creek Post on Dease River eastward to Kechika River. These people are also said to have been a tribe of giants which died out because of addiction to certain evil practices (4, p.21). Dease River was at one time actually also called "Nahany" River. Another Kaska informant labelled the Pelly River people in southern Yukon Territory as Nahani. It is doubtful that they would acknowledge the designation.

101 While at Fort Nelson, B.C., in 1943, the writer was assured that Nahani merely constituted another name for the Kaska Indians (there called Grand Lakers) who were said to live west of Nelson Forks and northwest of Fort Nelson (3, p. 24). When

Albert Dease is a pure Kaska and probably the most prominent member of these people living in the Dease region, being looked upon as Chief. 115

Dandy Jim is a well known Tahltan noted for his affability and intelligence. He speaks the best English of any of the older Tahltan and also speaks Tlingit fluently. He is a member of the Nalakoten or Nahlin clan of the Raven Phratry.

INTRODUCTION - Nahani Tribal Divisions

The Tahltan and Kaska belong to the Déné or Northern group of the great Athapaskan family and linguistically are part of the division of this stock known as the Nahani. The two tribes speak closely related dialects and are neighbors. Their territories lie in the north-western interior of British Columbia generally speaking between the Cascade or Coast range of mountains in the West and the main Liard river to the East, and between latitudes 56° and 60° north. They form an extension of the Nahani to the south west, appearing as a point or wedge between the Tlingit to the west and northwest and the Nishga /Niska/ and Retikshen to the south (See map*). To the north is the main body of the Nahani, and to the east and southeast /are/ tribes of other divisions of the Déné. As the Tahltan and Kaska are the only occupants of Nahani south of latitude 60°, or at least the only Nahani tribes with headquarters south of 60° in British Columbia they may be named for convenience the Southern Nahani. The rest of the Nahani occupy a wide stretch of country extending north to at least between latitudes 64° - 65° north and, according to my present information, consist of some six recognized tribes or rather divisions speaking slightly divergent dialects. I have not as yet been able to determine the degree of divergence in the various dialects but if what information I have can be depended on in many cases the differences of dialect are slight, or less than between the Tahltan and Kaska. 101 131 197 131 197

The exact number and names of the Nahani divisions, it seems, can never be known exactly or definitely until most of the country occupied by them has been visited and the northern bands interviewed. So far I have been among the southern bands only. Other things which render the subject difficult and 101

* Map to appear in one of the forthcoming issues.

101 add to confusion are:

1) Two or more names are sometimes applied by different peoples (and even the same people) to one and the same band or division, and, again, two seemingly distinct divisions are sometimes called by the same name.

101 2) The nomadic nature of some of the bands, their wide range of wanderings; and the absence of
●131 well-defined boundaries of tribes and bands, etc.

3) The overlapping of territories in some places for periods of years and even occasional overlapping of headquarters of bands, or migration of families and bands (sometimes temporarily) into old territories of other bands seeking better facilities for trading or hunting. It seems that some of these people then lose their old names and are called by new names or sometimes by the name of the people in whose country they settle.

101 4) Lack of the tribal sides /sic/ or of tribal differentiation among some of the Indians themselves - several of whom may call themselves by one name at one time and another name at another, because they may have lived or made their headquarters for a number of years at each of two or three localities, thus seemingly looking upon themselves as being entitled to one name as much as another. This is made all the easier because nearly all the designations of groups of people among the Athabaskans are really not designations of peoples as such, or tribes, or nations, but have reference only to locality or environment, which, if changed by the people, the term by which they are known soon becomes inapplicable. Besides this, some of the designations for groups of people are very general terms not derived from specific place-names, such as 'mountain or high ground people,' 'by /the/ lake people,' etc., terms which may be easily used for widely different peoples. However, although peoples are thus loosely designated by names of their general headquarters still there is evidence that a number of the names of divisions and tribes are quite old; the people carrying the names have made their headquarters in the same general locality for a long time back.

101 One other thing which may be mentioned here
197 is that although tribes of other linguistic stocks are
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generally well differentiated in the minds of the Indians, - excepting perhaps in a few places where there has been much intermixture or intermarriage, - tribes of Athabaskan lineage are not differentiated in the same way. The Indians seem to consider all within their ken as bands or scattered groups of the one family speaking the same kind of language differing only in slight degree in certain localities. They seem to take no cognizance, for instance, of the linguistic groups of Nahani, Sekani and Slave. With them, on the whole, the closer the dialect or the linguistic relationship seems to them the closer the blood relationship is thought to be. However, if a dialect /of, for instance,/ Nahani, seems to differ more or be less understandable to them than a dialect of Sekani, they will consider the latter the closer related, although the former is the closer of the two in-reality or according to the White man's point of view. It seems the languages of the Nahani group and the Sekani and Slave groups are on the whole rather closely related, although sufficiently distinct for separate grouping. Perhaps partly owing to this reason, the Indians have hardly any sense of the groupings.

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In the Handbook of American Indians the following are given as the divisions of the Nahani group.

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1.	Tahltan	Tahltan Division	Drainage basin of Stikine River and its tributaries as far as the mouth of Iskut River. Dease Lake, and the river halfway to McDames Creek the northern sources of the Nass and some of the southern branches of the Taku in Alaska and British Columbia,
2.	Takutine		Teslin River and Lake and upper Taku River, the basin of the Big Salmon River extending north to the Pelly River and east to the Upper Liard River.
3.	Titshotina	Kaska Division	Between the Cassiar Mountains and the Liard and Dease Rivers.
4.	Etagottine		

5. Esbataottine (Bighorn people?) Mountains between the Liard River and the Peace River, British Columbia.

6.	Abbatotine 'Bighorn people'	Up the Pelly, MacMillan and Stewart River valleys, Yukon Territory.
7.	Sasentina	Region between Dease and Black Rivers, British Columbia.
8.	Ettchaottine 'People who act contrarily'	One division /around/ Francis Lake, B.C., and another in neighborhood of old Fort Halkitt.
9.	Etagottine (See No. 4) 'People in the air'	In valleys of Rocky Mountains between the Esbataottine and the Tukkutk kutchin latitude 66 north.
10.	Krazylongottine 'People at the end of the willows'	Between the Mackenzie River and Willow Lake, Mackenzie Territory.
11.	Klokegottine 'Prairie people'	Between Mackenzie River and Lakes Martre, Grandin and Taché, Mackenzie Territory.

and perhaps Lakuyip and Tsetsaut.

The list of Nahani tribes collected by me from Tahltan and Kaska differs considerably from the list as given in the Handbook. I did not get the names of Nos. 4, 6, 9, 10 and 11 at all. No. 6 may be the same term as No. 5, and Nos. 4 and 9 are probably the same. Only No. 1 corresponds with my list exactly. The Tahltan and Kaska class No. 2 as Tlingit. No. 3 is their name for the Upper Liard or Francis Lake Indians and No. 5 their name for the Beaver River Indians (the Beaver River that joins the Liard about longitude 125°, flowing from the north). They give a different name for Division No. 6. No. 7 is their name for the Kaska of McDames Creek. No. 8 seems to be the same name as applied by them to the Fort Liard Indians. I get no name of people in the exact habitats of 9, 10 and 11. I heard of no Nahani in the habitat given for No. 5. This region is occupied by Sekani and Slave. Of the two tribes mentioned as possibly Nahani, the Tsetsaut are considered different or more closely related to the Sekani, whilst the Lakuyip may be a division of the Tahltan formerly located on the upper branches of the Nass River.

5: Teit E-5 (1912, 1915) 1956 ND12 Nahane ND12

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Of the list of tribes obtained from the Tahltan and Kaska the following appear to be Nahani.

1.	Tahltan	They speak one dialect of the Nahani which may be called Tahltan.
2.	Sêsotêna	McDames Creek, Dease River, Muddy River and generally between Cassiar Mountains and the Liard.
3.	Titcotêna	Upper Liard River and Hyland River. They adjoin No. 2 in the north.
4.	Nā.ăni	Pelly River Indians. All the upper Pelly River. These people adjoin No. 3 in the north. According to the Kaska, Nos. 2 and 3 talk exactly the same dialect and No. 4 differs only in the slightest degree. These divisions speak a second dialect of the Nahani which may be called Kaska.
5.	eiyô.na	Adjoining the Pelly River Indians on the north, most of them on a large river which joins the Pelly, probably the Macmillan. They probably extend beyond to the head of the Stewart also. These people speak a slightly different dialect from the Kaska, my informants saying /that/ a good many words were more or less different. They will thus form a third division of the Nahani dialectically.
6.	Little Salmon River Indians (my informants had forgotten their Indian name)	On the Little Salmon River bordering, it is said, on 4 and 5. It is not clear whether their dialect is the same as /that/ spoken by No.5. It is said to differ rather

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considerably from Kaska. One informant said 'these Indians speak quite a little different from Kaska.' They speak nearer to the dialect of No. 5 but he thought not the same. Possibly these people form a fourth dialectic division or they may fall in the same group with No. 5. The Tahltans claim they have very hard work to understand them.

7. Espātoten or histoten — The Goat tribe or Mountain Indians adjoining No. 3 on the east. On the upper Beaver River and in the mountains across the North and South Nahani Rivers between the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers. Speak a slightly different dialect from Kaska. Some informants said they talk very fast and some of their words are different from Kaska. When they speak slowly the Kaska can understand them fairly well. The speech of these people may form a third dialect of the Nahani.

8. tsetsexoténa — The habitat and affiliations of this tribe are uncertain, but it seems they probably belong to the Nahani group and inhabit the mountains north of No. 7. The Kaska were not clear as to the relationship of their speech and their exact habitat.

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131 These divisions appear to comprise all the Nahani people known to the Tahltan and Kaska. There may however be other Nahani divisions unknown to them further to the north. As will be seen from the map, these peoples occupy territories contiguous to each other in a wide strip running north from about latitude 56 to latitude 64 north. I did not hear of any Nahani bands east of

the Mackenzie nor south of the Liard to the east of the Kaska. According to the Kaska the country east of the Mackenzie and around the lower Liard is held by the Dogrib and other tribes they think closely related to them. The ătcotĕne of Fort Liard and the Black River, etc., appear to belong to this group viz., the Slave. In the Handbook Ettchaottine is given as a division of the Nahani, and again Etchaotine as the Slave proper, a division of the Etchareottine living between Liard River and the divide along Black, Beaver and Willow Rivers. This answers fairly well to the habitat of the ătcotĕne as given by the Kaska. The three terms seem to be the same, or possibly Ettchaottine may be intended for Titcotĕna, viz., the Frances Lake Indians. South of the Liard along the Nelson River, etc., Sekani separate the Nahani from the Slave. To the s[illegible], Nahani border on Sekani and Tsimshian tribes and to the west on Tlingit tribes as far north as latitude 62. In the extreme north, /there is/ little doubt, they border on the Kutchin. 101 131

Names for the Tribe

In a tribal or collective sense the Tahltan call themselves titcaxhanotĕn 'people of titcaxhan.' They claim titcax.han is the name of an ancient seat or headquarters of the tribe close to the mouth of Tahltan River, viz., the little flat where the present salmon houses are on the East side of the government bridge crossing the Tahltan River. The meaning of the name is said to be 'salmon ascending the creek,' or to be connected with the ascent of salmon up the Tahltan River at this place, which was formerly a great salmon fishing place of the tribe and a central rendezvous and trading place. According to several informants this place was at one time the chief headquarters of the tribe and the original tribal seat. 101

The name Tahltan by which the tribe is now (altogether) known to the Whites is claimed to be of Tlingit origin. Taltankwan was formerly a common general term used by the Taku and Wrangel Tlingit for the tribe. It is really the Tlingit name for the low flat on the West side of the mouth of Tahltan River just opposite titcaxhan. Dandy Jim, who speaks Tlingit fluently, derives the term from Tlingit tal 'pan,' 'bowl' or something pan-shaped, and tan having the sense of permanency 'remain,' 'be,' 'is,' etc., the place being so named by the Tlingit because of the

Habitat

The Tahltan claim very considerable area of country in the Cassiar district of British Columbia, the southern extremity of their territories touching latitude 56 and the northern extremity latitude 60. East and west their country extends from the Cascade to the Cassiar Range. The upper Stikine may be called the center of their territory. They control all the drainage basin of this river and only in a few places do they extend beyond to some of the neighboring feeders of the waters of the Taku, Nass, Skeena, Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers. 131

Characteristics of the Country

The region occupied by the Tahltan is of a semi-mountainous and semi-forested character. There are extensive areas of plateau and rolling country lightly timbered or for the most part open. As the timber line is low in this latitude and much of the country is equal in elevation to or above the timber line a great deal of country (all the higher parts) is almost devoid of timber. The lower plateaux and valleys are generally well timbered with trees of medium and small size - although nowhere growing thickly as on the Coast, nor is there anywhere much under brush as in the latter region. Many of the upper valleys are grassy or mossy in character and have very little timber. Moss is plentiful both in the open country and in the forests, and muskegs are often to be met with. The slopes of the hills and mountains, especially in the more easterly and westerly parts of the country, are often steep and rocky. The country as a whole shows much signs of erosion and in some places its nature is volcanic. The valley of the Stikine River, commencing immediately east of the Cascades for a distance of some forty miles, is drier than the rest of the country and resembles a good deal in appearance and flora some valleys further south in the Dry Belt of British Columbia. /To the/ west, in the Cascade or Coast mountains, where the Stikine and other streams pierce the range, the country assumes a different appearance, becoming very mountainous and rocky; glaciers and snow fields abound, and the lower valleys become gorge-like in character, with heavy timber and underbrush where the soil is not too rocky. Here the climate becomes cooler, and proceeding westwards the rainfall and snow fall become heavier and heavier. 133 137 133 134 [137] 132

132 However, very little of the Tahltan country lies within this wet belt. In the valley of the Lower Stikine the annual precipitation is estimated to be 100 inches or over, whilst in most parts of the Interior it probably does not exceed 15 to 25 inches. The southern part of the Tahltan country towards and around the head /waters/ of the Nass has more rainfall and snow fall than the northern and central parts and consequently this part of the country is on the whole more timbered.

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The extremes of temperature are great. It seems the greatest summer heat in the valleys is from 85 to 95F in different localities, depending a good deal on altitude, and in winter the greatest cold from 45 to 60 below zero F.

137 The principal trees are black pine, spruce (of two or three kinds,) balsam, willow, birch, alder and aspen. Hemlock, balsam, cedar and poplar are common in the valleys of the Cascades. Larch, Douglas fir and several kinds of pine so common in the Southern Interior are entirely wanting. Larch of some kind however is reported in certain localities further east in the Kaska country and elsewhere beyond the boundaries of the Tahltan, and cypress is reported to occur in the valley of the Iskut. (For a further description of the characteristics of the Tahltan country see Emmons pp. 9-11).

Tribal Boundaries

131 619 I spent considerable time with a number of informants trying to locate as correctly as possible the boundaries or approximate boundaries of the territories claimed by the Tahltan. Generally speaking, the Tahltan boundary on the west follows the axis of the Cascade or Coast Range, but the central part of the range is seldom penetrated except at a few points, as it is practically nothing but a sea of high rocky peaks and glaciers almost devoid of life. The lower eastern part of the range next /to/ the Interior plateau is the only portion really used by the Tahltan. There is a break in the general western boundary line of the Tahltan in the neighborhood of the Iskut and Stikine Rivers. Here the Tlingit claimed the river valleys on the Iskut to almost through the Cascade range, and on the Stikine to well beyond the range into the Interior to a point at least about or a little above Glenora, according to some informants,

131 619 648

er to /?/ miles above Telegraph Creek, according to most informants. This is a distance of nearly 170 miles from the mouth of the River. They claimed complete right of way on these rivers as far up as the points mentioned and have been known to extort payment from Tahltan who wanted to go to the lower river or coast. The Tlingit at one time had a permanent settlement on the Iskut at the Forks and another some miles further up the main river. On the Stikine they always had a number of summer camps from the Canyon up to Glenora, where they dried salmon and gathered and cured berries. Besides these they had some temporary trading camps. They did very little hunting along the river, and in fact there was little to hunt excepting goats and bears, of which there were also plenty in their own country. It seems they seldom ventured far back in the hills anywhere, but kept close to their camps on the river. Before the cold weather set in and ice commenced running in the river they left for the Coast. The Tahltan then had complete control of the river as far down as about the mouth of the Iskut, for in the winter time, it seems, Tlingit hardly ever camped above this point. However, only a few of the Tahltan made any use of the river valley below the Clearwater River and that chiefly for trapping of furbearing animals. (It is said they could not cure salmon and berries properly in their own country without the aid of smoke and heat from fires as the climate was too wet. In the Interior, however, they could dry them in the sun and wind.) 131 619 648 [486]

The Stikine River valley between the mouth of the Iskut and Telegraph Creek was thus used to some extent by both Tlingit and Tahltan, both claiming certain rights there, but neither tribe had any headquarters nor permanent abode there, nor was there anything very conducive in the nature of the country and its resources and climate to promote permanent settlement.

On the north the Tahltan boundary, from about longitude 133W., its most western point, ran northeasterly parallel to the Taku and Nakina Rivers some considerable distance back from them on the south or east sides. It seems to have crossed the Inklin River a little lower than halfway between its mouth where it joins the Taku and its head at the mouth of the Sheslay. Continuing north easterly to near the head of Teslin Lake /the boundary/ passed just west of Spruce Mountain 131 619

131 619 in this part touching some of the sources of the Nakina. Embracing all or nearly all the small lakes at the head of Atlin Lake, it continued north easterly across the Jennings River not far from its mouth. The Tahltan thus possessed all the Nahlin, the other large feeders of the Taku from the east, and the southern sources of the Yukon which run into Teslin Lake. From the head of the latter lake or from the Jennings River their boundary ran to and beyond the water-shed dividing the waters running into the Yukon on the one hand and the Mackenzie on the other in latitude 60 N. Here it seems they claimed hunting rights on the upper Rancheria River and the whole country adjoining that stream to its junction with the Liard, where their territory ran to a point and they had a trading place. This was their most northern point. Bending back around the head of Blue River their line seems to have run south and south-easterly, crossing Dease River about the mouth of the Cottonwood and continuing across the sources of the Muddy River almost to longitude 127 W., probably the most eastern point of their territory. From here their line followed the center of the Cassiar Mountains south and south westernly between the sources of the Stikine and Finlay to the head waters of the Skeena, which they seem to have crossed somewhere to the east of Ground Hog Mountain. Continuing, their boundary followed the watershed between the Skeena and Nass Rivers to about latitude 56, (its) most southern point. Thence their line ran west crossing the upper Nass somewhere near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, reaching the Cascades again somewhere near the heads of Bear and Salmon Rivers. It will thus be seen that the Tahltan occupied much of the headwaters of the Nass and some of the head waters of the Skeena as well as certain feeders of the Liard. It seems there may have been some overlapping of territory along Dease River, as some Tahltan claim they had right of way or control of the country down as far as McDames Creek, where they sometimes went to trade, whilst the Kaska claim they hunted the country up as far as Dease Lake. It seems the Tahltan did very little hunting below Canyon River or certainly little or none below Cottonwood River and Eagle Rivers.

131 619 361 NOTE: I found it rather hard to get a full understanding of the approximate boundaries of the Tahltan, as some persons had a knowledge of some but not of others. There may have been some changing or extension of boundaries within the last 100 years in certain places owing to trade and some changing of headquarters.

5: Tsit E-5 (1912, 1915) 1956 ND12 Nahane ND12

Boundaries are less well defined than /those of/ tribes further south, because /the Tahltan were?/ more nomadic and /had/ no real permanent villages formerly. Also certain families through intermarriage with neighbors, especially in the east and west, appear to have ranged over and used territory of both tribes. 131● 619 361

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

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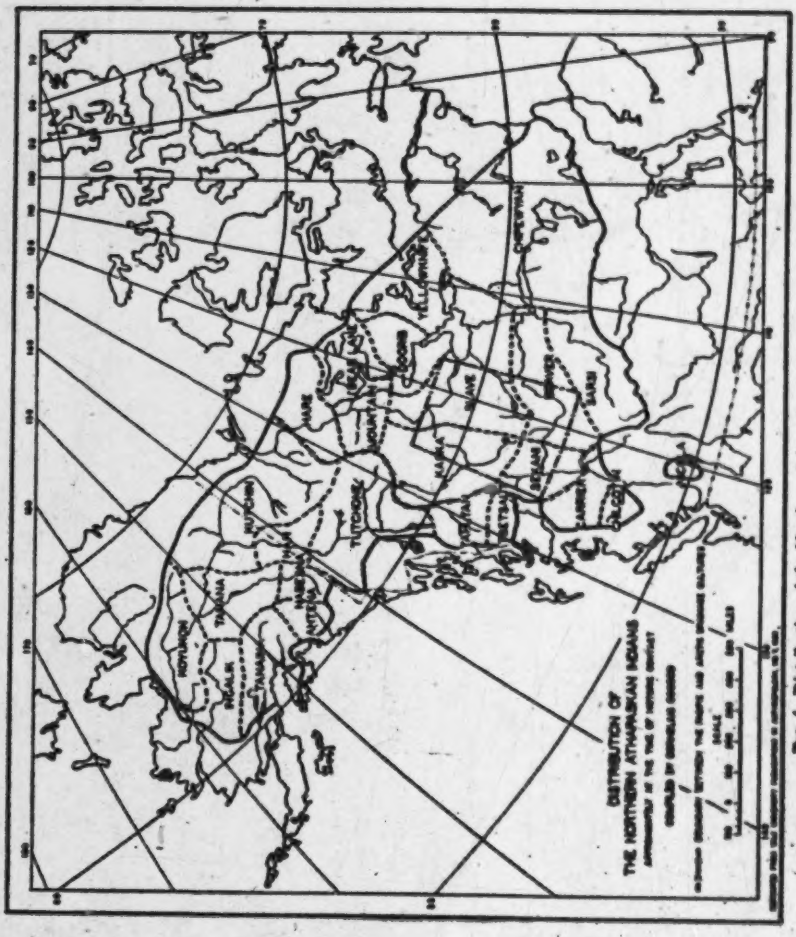

Fig. 1. Distribution of the Northern Athapaskan Indians (after Osgood).

[p. 10]

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

INTRODUCTION

THE present monograph is intended primarily to describe the aboriginal and time-of-contact lifeways of the Kaska Indians of northern British Columbia and southern Yukon Territory, Canada (Fig. 1). The writer's principal object has been to add to present knowledge concerning the Northern Athapaskan Indians. As far as the organization of the material is concerned, the cultural data follow this introduction, which includes, in addition to these preliminary remarks, a description of the environment (based mainly on contemporary observation), tribal distribution and nomenclature, population data, a sketch of psychological types, and an index of principal informants.[1] The description of aboriginal Kaska culture is divided into five main sections covering, respectively, data pertaining to the food quest, camp life and some associated activities, social organization, ideological system, and the life cycle. These main divisions are in turn further broken down. For many of the dress patterns, implements, and behaviors, alternatives are indicated. It must be kept in mind that evidence does not warrant the assumption that all such alternatives existed simultaneously.

Information has been obtained primarily from the Upper Liard and Dease River Kaska (Fig. 2). When available, data from other Kaska groups follow these two in the following order: Tselona, Espatotena, and Frances Lake Kaska. References to adjacent tribes, like the Tahltan, Pelly River people, Bear Lake Sekani, and Tlingit will be found in footnotes.

ENVIRONMENT

To the person who has not been raised to love the prairie the Cassiar, as the northwestern area of British Columbia and southern Yukon Territory is often called,[2] must appeal as a colorful and exciting region. Lying between the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Coast Range to the west the country is bounded north and south by water sheds of considerable height. Geologically the Cassiar may be considered as a portion of the Yukon Plateau.[3] Between the eastern and western ranges the land is rolling and crossed from northwest to southeast by the Cassiar Mountains, which extend from Teslin Lake to the headwaters of the Finlay River (Fig. 2). Below McDame Creek, 80 miles south of Lower Post, the Dease River cuts a gorge through the Cassiar Mountains

[1] The history of the Cassiar and its people will not be presented in this monograph, since it has already been written in some detail. See Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 38–50; Scidmore, *Sitkine River in 1898* (1899).

[2] For an impressionistic picture of the area see Turton, *Cassiar* (1934). The term Yukon is apparently derived from the Athapaskan word for Northern Lights, yukąn. (Cf. Osgood, *Ingalik Material Culture* [1940], 439.) Le Jeune, however, derives the territory's name from a supposed "Yuki" (Wicked Ones) Indian tribe. Le Jeune, *Dictionnaire Général du Canada* (1931), II, 826.

[3] Lees, *Geology of Teslin-Quiet Lake Area, Yukon* (1936), 5. See also Hanson and McNaughton, *Eagle-McDame Area, Cassiar District, British Columbia* (1936), 2–3; Kerr, *Dease Lake Area, Cassiar District, B. C.* (1936). For maps the reader is referred to Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 32, 34.

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FIG. 2. Map of the Carrier and Its People.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

at Pine Rapids. Above McDame the river passes west of the Horseranch Mountains, a spur of the Cassiar Range. The more rugged features of the district are somewhat softened at the confluence of the Dease and Liard rivers, the site of Lower Post. It is this region, actually extending westward from Smith River to Watson Lake, which Williams has described as "a rolling plateau deeply covered with sand and gravel, and varied by low rounded hills and deep, well forested stream valleys."[4] Bisecting the Cassiar from north to south is the so-called Rocky Mountain Trench, one of the proposed routes for the Alaska Highway that has also been surveyed from Prince George to Watson Lake for a railroad. The survey line can still be followed and crosses the Alaska Highway a few hundred feet east of Lower Post.[5]

The Cassiar is drained by several large rivers including, from west to east, the Frances, Dease, Hyland, Kechika (Muddy), Coal, Rock, and Smith. The lower reaches of the Kechika or Muddy River are sometimes referred to as the Turnagain or Black River. All of these run into the easterly flowing Liard, which in turn enters the Mackenzie at Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories, whose waters finally reach the Arctic Ocean. In spring and early summer the streams are swift and deep. Toward autumn the water level recedes considerably but the numerous rapids always render river navigation difficult and sometimes hazardous. "Rising in the elevated country west of the Rocky Mountains, the Liard falls rapidly toward the east, the difference in elevation between the mouth of the Dease and the Mackenzie amounting to nearly 1,650 feet, and is characterized nearly everywhere by impetuous currents, by dangerous rapids and narrow whirlpool cañons."[6] About 50 miles below Lower Post is Hell's Gate, the most famous of the Liard's rapids. Here the river cuts its torturous route through the barrier of the Rockies. The spring break-up of the frozen Liard is reported to be particularly spectacular in this canyon where huge slabs of ice pile up with pressure increasing behind them until, with a terrific roar that can be heard for miles, the mass gives way and charges through the narrow, cavelike opening. The difficulties associated with water transportation up the Liard from Fort Simpson were largely responsible for the abandonment, in 1865, of Fort Halkett, the Hudson's Bay Company post at the confluence of the Liard and Smith rivers (Fig. 2). Since that date the principal means of access to the Cassiar has been from the south, travelers, among whom gold seekers occupied a prominent place, journeying up the Stikine River from Wrangell, Alaska, to Telegraph Creek, B. C. From here they crossed the height of land to reach the foot of Dease Lake, 200 miles south of Lower Post. By 1946 this route was rapidly falling into abeyance as the Alaska Highway provided a new and modern means of access.

The climate of the intermontane Cassiar is seasonally variable. In summer, as elsewhere in the northern forest, the days are hot and temperatures reach 90 degrees in the

[4] Williams, *Geological Reconnaissance along the Alaska Highway from Fort Nelson, British Columbia, to Watson Lake, Yukon* (1944), 2. See also McConnell, *Report on an Exploration in the Yukon and Mackenzie Basins* (1890), 80.

[5] In 1950 the New York newspapers reported fresh talk of a proposed railroad to extend from Prince George to Fairbanks, Alaska, passing through Lower Post.

[6] McConnell, *Report on an Exploration in the Yukon and Mackenzie Basins* (1890), 34D.

7: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1947
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WITCH-FEAR IN POST-CONTACT KASKA SOCIETY

By JOHN J. HONIGMANN

ABORIGINALLY the Kaska, like their Northern Athapaskan neighbors, were familiar with sorcery—behavior in which a person with sufficiently strong shamanistic power would steal, or was believed to steal, the wind or soul of a personal enemy and thereby induce illness. Although people who practiced such behavior were feared by the rest of the society's members, they were not usually put to death or otherwise punished. Sorcery, however, was regarded as evil and might therefore automatically lead to punishment in the form of insanity. There is no evidence that sorcery in aboriginal times ever was as prevalent as similar behavior in certain African and Melanesian groups. Following white contact, however, a socially dyscrasic form of behavior appeared among the Kaska which, to distinguish it from the sorcery complex associated with the aboriginal society, may be designated as witch-hunting or witch-fear. The present paper will first present the available evidence from historical sources and informants regarding this form of behavior. Following this an attempt will be made to analyze that material from an historical, psychological, and structural point of view and apply the findings in a universal frame of reference.[1]

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

The Kaska still occupy the territory which they have always inhabited in the memory of the oldest informants. This is the area extending northwest of the Stikine River, British Columbia, Canada, to the divide north of Frances Lake, Yukon Territory, and from the western Cordillera east across the Rocky Mountains (Fig. 1). The main rivers traversing this region are the Liard, Frances, and Dease. The name Kaska is a conventional term adopted from one group of people to classify a number of contiguous tribes speaking closely related dialects. Within the area designated as Kaska several such tribes have been variously distinguished in the literature, but for present purposes the names by which they are locally known today will suffice. In the extreme north are the Frances Lake Indians. Occupying the basin of the Liard, from about the present Highway crossing twenty-three miles above Lower Post to within a hundred miles of that river's source, are the Upper Liard Indians. The

[1] Field work with the Kaska Indians took place from June to September 1944 and from June to December 1945. The work was sponsored by the Department of Anthropology and the Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University. To Professors Cornelius Osgood and Irving Rouse are due thanks for critically reading this manuscript. The present account will offer a minimum of general ethnographic detail. A description of the aboriginal culture based on reconstruction is planned for future publication and a psychologically oriented study of the contemporary culture is already partially in manuscript.

7: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1947
ND12 Nahane ND12

basin of Dease Lake and Dease River is the home of the Kaska proper who may also be distinguished as the Dease River Indians. Extending to the eastern mountains are the Nelson people; until perhaps twenty years ago this tribe occasionally crossed the mountains to trade at Fort Nelson from whence they derive their name. Another branch of the Kaska, the Goat Indians (Espatotena), occupied the area north of the Liard but east of the Rocky Mountains above the mouths of the Beaver and South Nahanni Rivers. They are appar-

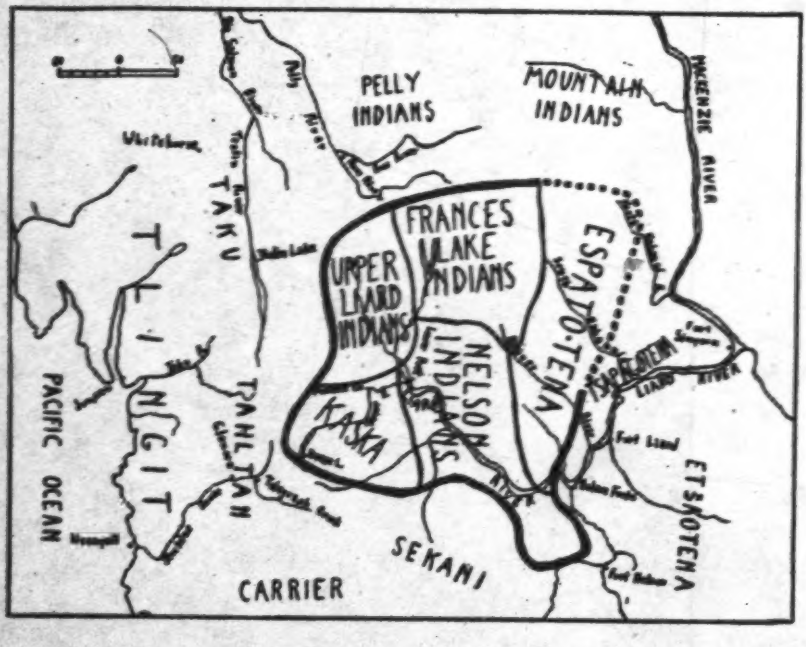

FIG. 1. Map of the Kaska Area Showing Kaska and Adjoining Tribes.

ently Grouard's People of the Mountains or Bad People who consistently traded at Fort Liard after the abandonment of Fort Halkett in 1865 and today do not visit Lower Post.[3]

Surrounding the Kaska are other Athapaskan-speaking groups. Immediately to the south and southwest are the Tahltan and beyond them the Carrier. North of the Frances Lake Indians is the country of the Pelly River people. To the east the Kaska are adjoined by the related Fort Nelson Slave (Etlaotena) and Beaver Indians (Tsapagotena), while across the western

[3] Grouard, n.d., p. 102; Osgood, 1936, p. 13.